



WASHINGTON

Berkshire County



[NARRATIVE](#)
[GEOGRAPHY](#)
[GOVERNMENT](#)
[DEMOGRAPHICS](#)
[HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS](#)
[TRANSPORTATION](#)
[CULTURE AND RECREATION](#)
[MISCELLANEOUS](#)



NARRATIVE

Narrative

The Town of Washington lies on rough and mountainous terrain almost entirely in the Green Mountain range in Berkshire County. The early history of the town begins with a real estate scam when Robert Watson of Sheffield in 1757 sold the land on which the town would be established to investors, claiming that it was his to sell. By 1760, the purchasers discovered that the claim was untrue and had to repurchase the properties from the Indians. After the new owners started settling the property, the government claimed ownership of the territory and the whole tangle of claims and counter-claims didn't get straightened out until 1763. However, despite these delays and setbacks, the first marriage was celebrated in 1774 between John Phelps and Mary Ashley and there were enough settlers in Washington by 1777 to warrant formal incorporation, drawn there by the fertile land in the valleys between the mountain ridges. The town has a great deal of good grazing land rather than grain growing land and boasts five small lakes, a number of clear streams and many springs of clear water.

Unlike many of its neighboring communities with abundant supplies of water, Washington developed few industries beyond charcoal making, and has remained down through the years, a small rural community. In 1885, the Berkshire County Gazetteer noted that the town had "no shops, no mills, no store".

(Narrative compiled from historical materials)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Western Massachusetts, bordered by Middlefield on the east; Becket on the southeast; Lee on the southwest; Lenox on the west; Pittsfield on the northwest; and Dalton, Hinsdale, and Peru on the north. Washington is 8 miles southwest of Pittsfield, 21 miles north of Great Barrington, and 132 miles west of Boston.

Total Area: 38.68 sq. miles

Land Area: 37.76 sq. miles

Population: 615

Density: 16 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Great Barrington Station)

Normal temperature in January.....20.1°F

Normal temperature in July.....68.1°F

Normal annual precipitation.....44.8"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

East Lee, Pittsfield East, Becket, Peru

Regional Planning Agency

Berkshire County

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 623-8878

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1777

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%
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Total Registered 351

Democrats 91 25.9 % Republicans 39 11.1 % Other parties 0 0.0 % Unenrolled Voters 221 63.0 %

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Washington town, Berkshire County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	544	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	544	100.0
Male.....	280	51.5	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	4	0.7
Female.....	264	48.5	Mexican.....	-	-
Under 5 years.....	27	5.0	Puerto Rican.....	-	-
5 to 9 years.....	35	6.4	Cuban.....	-	-
10 to 14 years.....	50	9.2	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	4	0.7
15 to 19 years.....	45	8.3	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	540	99.3
20 to 24 years.....	18	3.3	White alone.....	537	98.7
25 to 34 years.....	43	7.9	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	94	17.3	Total population.....	544	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	120	22.1	In households.....	544	100.0
55 to 59 years.....	31	5.7	Householder.....	203	37.3
60 to 64 years.....	27	5.0	Spouse.....	136	25.0
65 to 74 years.....	31	5.7	Child.....	171	31.4
75 to 84 years.....	19	3.5	Own child under 18 years.....	136	25.0
85 years and over.....	4	0.7	Other relatives.....	13	2.4
Median age (years).....	40.7	(X)	Under 18 years.....	6	1.1
18 years and over.....	400	73.5	Nonrelatives.....	21	3.9
Male.....	204	37.5	Unmarried partner.....	12	2.2
Female.....	196	36.0	In group quarters.....	-	-
21 years and over.....	380	69.9	Institutionalized population.....	-	-
62 years and over.....	66	12.1	Noninstitutionalized population.....	-	-
65 years and over.....	54	9.9	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	25	4.6	Total households.....	203	100.0
Female.....	29	5.3	Family households (families).....	163	80.3
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	74	36.5
One race.....	543	99.8	Married-couple family.....	136	67.0
White.....	541	99.4	With own children under 18 years.....	57	28.1
Black or African American.....	2	0.4	Female householder, no husband present.....	17	8.4
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	-	-	With own children under 18 years.....	9	4.4
Asian.....	-	-	Nonfamily households.....	40	19.7
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	30	14.8
Chinese.....	-	-	Householder 65 years and over.....	13	6.4
Filipino.....	-	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	78	38.4
Japanese.....	-	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	42	20.7
Korean.....	-	-	Average household size.....	2.68	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	2.96	(X)
Other Asian ¹	-	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-	Total housing units.....	236	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	-	-	Occupied housing units.....	203	86.0
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	33	14.0
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	26	11.0
Some other race.....	-	-	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	0.5	(X)
Two or more races.....	1	0.2	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	-	(X)
<i>Race alone or in combination with one</i>			HOUSING TENURE		
<i>or more other races:³</i>			Occupied housing units.....	203	100.0
White.....	542	99.6	Owner-occupied housing units.....	194	95.6
Black or African American.....	2	0.4	Renter-occupied housing units.....	9	4.4
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	-	-	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.69	(X)
Asian.....	-	-	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	2.44	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-			
Some other race.....	1	0.2			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0

Conventional Federal: 0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 0

Federal (Section 8): 0



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Washington is situated in Berkshire County, a region of hills and low mountains that widen to create the Berkshire Valley in the south. The major cities and towns are linked together by U.S. Route 7. North Adams and Pittsfield are major points of entry for rail freight into Massachusetts, and the region has several commercial airports.

Major Highways

The principal highway is State Route 8, which runs roughly N-S through the Berkshires.

Rail

Freight rail service is available from Conrail. Contact number: (617) 783-6222

Bus

Washington is not affiliated with a regional transit authority.

Other

The Pittsfield Municipal Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility located in neighboring Pittsfield, has 2 asphalt runways 3,496' and 5,000' long. Instrument approaches available: Non-precision.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

(American Association of Museums)

None

MUSEUMS

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

Maple View Nursing Home

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

None

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.